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Source: *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 104, No. 4, Dedication of Library Hall of the American Philosophical Society, Autumn General Meeting, November, 1959 (Aug. 15, 1960), pp. 371-390

Published by: [American Philosophical Society](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/985616>

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FROM MEDIEVAL TO MODERN LIBRARY

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(Read in part November 11, 1959)

ALTHOUGH we generally and I daresay properly assume that the modern library, like the university, stems directly from the medieval tradition, the ancient Roman library in all its essentials has strangely survived into the modern era.¹ The

¹ There is an enormous literature relating to the history of libraries, but with a few exceptions only those works actually cited or otherwise referred to in this paper are noted here. Most references are given in the text (in parentheses). The best general work, containing extensive bibliographies, is the *Geschichte der Bibliotheken* in Fritz Milkau and Georg Leyh, eds., *Handbuch der Bibliothekswissenschaft* 3, pts. 1-2, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 1955-1957, the cooperative effort of seventeen different scholars and (in some cases) their assistants. German libraries are dealt with in considerable detail in this work, especially from the earlier eighteenth century to the present (pt. 2: pp. 1-491), and there are notable sections on French libraries from the Renaissance (pt. 1: pp. 682-830), English libraries from the Reformation (pt. 2: pp. 628-774), and Italian libraries from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (pt. 2: pp. 492-581). A wide range of miscellaneous detail relating to libraries may be checked in Karl Löffler, Joachim Kirchner, and Wilhelm Olbrich, eds., *Lexikon des gesamten Buchwesens*, 2 vols., Stuttgart, Hiersemann, 1952-1953, and Kirchner's *Bilderatlas zum Buchwesen* (also listed as vols. 3-4 of the preceding), Stuttgart, Hiersemann, 1955-1956: the *Bilderatlas* gives numerous facsimiles of folios and pages from famous manuscripts and printed books, manuscript and book illustrations, bindings, various type fonts, printing presses, paper mills, scenes from the book trade, etc., as well as numerous pictures of library buildings and their interiors. James Westfall Thompson *et al.*, *The medieval library*, University of Chicago Press, 1939, attempts a wide coverage of the subject, but is marred in a number of chapters, especially those which Thompson wrote, by a woeful inexactitude of fact and reference. Oskar Thyregod, *Die Kulturfunktion der Bibliothek*, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1936, explores the function of the library in the gradual extension of reading and study as it made increased numbers of books much easier of access. Thyregod is singularly well informed on the development of American libraries.

References are made in the text to Odorico Rinaldi [Raynaldus] *Annales ecclesiastici*; J. P. Migne's *Patrologiae latinae cursus completus* (also abbr. *PL*); and J. D. Mansi's *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*. Of great value for the history of the Vatican Library are: Eugene Müntz, *Les Arts à la cour des papes pendant le XV^e et le XVI^e siècle: Recueil de documents inédits . . .*, 3 vols., Paris, Thorin, 1878-1879, 1882

same elements to be found in the libraries described by Cicero, Martial, Aulus Gellius, and others are still manifest in the Vatican and other

(Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, fascs. 4,9,28); E. Müntz and Paul Fabre, *La Bibliothèque du Vatican au XV^e siècle d'après des documents inédits*, *ibid.*, fasc. 48, Paris, 1887; and E. Müntz, *La Bibliothèque du Vatican au XVI^e siècle*, Paris, Leroux, 1886. Léopold Delisle, *Le Cabinet des Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Impériale [Nationale]*, 3 vols., Paris, Imprimerie Impériale [Nationale], 1868-1881, is invaluable for the history of French manuscripts and libraries, and W. Wattenbach, *Das Schriftwesen im Mittelalter*, 4 ed., Graz, Akad. Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1958 (repr. of 3 ed. Leipzig, Hirzel, 1896), remains very useful for its constant citation of the sources. The importance of Charles M. Briquet, *Les Filigranes: Dictionnaire historique des marques du papier dès leur apparition vers 1282 jusqu'en 1600*, 4 vols., 2 ed., Leipzig, Hiersemann, 1923, is indicated in the text, as is that of Theodor Gottlieb, *Über mittelalterliche Bibliotheken* Leipzig, Harrassowitz, 1890 (repr. Graz, Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1955).

For some of the better known histories of the medieval library, see the *Handb. d. Bibliothekswissenschaft*. 3-1, sec. 119: pp. 246-248. John Willis Clark, *The care of books*, 1 ed., Cambridge Univ. Press, 1901 (I have not had access to the 2nd edition) is a pioneer work in the history of library organization and fittings (*armaria*, lecterns, stalls, etc.); a number of important corrections of Clark's work have been made in Canon Burnett Hillman Streeter's study of *The chained library*, London, Macmillan, 1931. Both Clark and Streeter publish numerous illustrations of old library furnishings. Edgar Lehmann, *Die Bibliotheksräume der deutschen Klöster im Mittelalter*, Berlin, Akademie-Verlag, 1957, is brief but useful, and N. R. Ker, Oxford College libraries in the sixteenth century, *The Bodleian Library Record* 6: 459-515, 1959, is very interesting and informative. The Rev. William Dunn Macray's learned *Annals of the Bodleian Library*, Oxford, 2 ed., Oxford, Clarendon, 1890, contains much information, but displays little more historical insight than a good monastic chronicle of the later Middle Ages, and requires in its later portions the accompaniment of Sir Edmund Craster's very good *History of the Bodleian Library, 1845-1945*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1952. Bodley's letters to his librarian, Thomas James, written without indication of the year, are dated in G. W. Wheeler, ed., *Letters of Sir Thomas Bodley to Thomas James, First Keeper of the Bodleian Library*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1926.

Arundell Esdaile, *The British Museum Library*, London, Allen and Unwin, 1946, is a good history of the

modern libraries. Mural paintings illustrative of the history of thought, commemorative inscriptions, portraits of great writers and their patrons; the wooden presses or *armaria* containing books; study rooms off great central halls or porticoes which could be employed for meetings—all these we find in both ancient and modern libraries. Just as there were two libraries, one for Greek and the other for Latin books, in the more important libraries of the early empire such

B.M. library, with succinct descriptions of the major collections of manuscripts and printed books and very helpful indications of the catalogues which have been issued concerning them. The text also contains references to Robert Cowtan, *Memories of the British Museum*, London, R. Bentley, 1872, and G. F. Barwick, *The Reading Room of the British Museum*, London, Benn, 1929. Far from the least interesting items cited in the text are the *Reports, Returns, and Other Papers, printed by the Houses of Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland: Parliamentary Papers 194-195*, dated respectively 6 August, 1835, and 14 July, 1836, relating to the parliamentary investigation of the British Museum, together with similar returns and reports for 1846-1849 (in *Parl. Papers 196*). One could wish that there were a history of the Library of Congress as good as Esdaile's account of the British Museum Library. William Dawson Johnston, *History of the Library of Congress 1*, Washington, D. C., U. S. Government Printing Office, 1904, is corrected at some points, and extended to 1945, in David C. Mearns' historical sketch of the library, which constitutes a large part of the *Annual Report of the Library of Congress for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1946*, Washington, U. S. Govt. Printing Office, 1947: 13-227. Mearns' account is well informed, but written in a sometimes racy vernacular, which catches Clio in shocked surprise. Throughout the writing of this paper I have had almost daily access to the learning of my friend and colleague, Dr. Rudolf Hirsch, Associate Director of Libraries in the University of Pennsylvania, to whom I give my heartiest thanks for his most generous help.

As this paper went off to the printer, it seemed advisable to provide the reader with some pictures to help illustrate the text. I am most grateful for the speed and courtesy with which all the following responded to my appeal for permission to reproduce photographs belonging to them: Mr. F. C. Morgan, The Cloisters, Hereford, England, for the carrels at Gloucester Cathedral (fig. 1) and the book press with chained books at Hereford (fig. 4); the Art Reference Bureau of Ancram, New York, agents of the Fratelli Alinari, Florence, for the Biblioteca Laurenziana (fig. 3); the Secretary to the Delegates of the Clarendon Press, Oxford, for the west wing of the Merton College library, Oxford (fig. 5); and Mr. F. R. Yerbury, Hon. A.R.I.B.A., for the lectern in the old library at Trinity Hall, Cambridge (fig. 7). Thanks are due also to Messrs. Herbert Oppenheimer, Nathan, and Vandyk, Solicitors, London, trustees of the estate of the late Canon B. H. Streeter, and to Macmillan and Company, London, publishers of *The chained library*.

as those in the Porticus Octaviae near the theater of Marcellus in Rome, in the temple of the Palatine Apollo, in the Bibliotheca Ulpia in the Forum of Trajan, and at Hadrian's villa, so there were two separate libraries for Greek and Latin literature in the Vaticana, as housed by Sixtus IV between 1475 and 1481, and the ancient Roman conception was given a final and glorious embodiment in the plans which Fontana prepared in 1587 for Sixtus V, the builder of the Vatican Library as we know it today. Ancient libraries were often placed in especially close relationships to temples and churches, just as the Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana has long served the needs of the Sancta Romana Ecclesia as well as those of the secular scholarly world. Many of the later medieval popes were scholars. Distinction in canon law, for example, carried a dozen prominent figures to the throne of St. Peter. John XXI was a physician, an inveterate reader, who died a martyr to the cause of scholarship in May 1277 when the ceiling fell down on him in the library he had built in the papal palace at Viterbo in order to have a quiet place to study (Raynaldus, ad. ann. 1277, no. 19). Tragedy may strike anywhere, of course, but by and large libraries have an excellent record for safety.

The general purpose of the Vatican Library was enunciated by Pope Sixtus IV on 1 March, 1481, when he promoted Pietro Demetrio da Lucca to the post of sub-librarian under the famous Bartolomeo Platina, historian of the papacy. Demetrio's high qualifications induced Sixtus, according to the papal brief, "to commit to your diligence the care of our library than which nothing can be dearer to us . . .," which had been collected "for the use of all scholars both of our own age and of time to come" (Müntz and Fabre, 299). In the Vaticana today there is a well-known register (MS. lat. 3964) giving the names of many readers who borrowed books from the papal library during the reign of Sixtus (Müntz and Fabre, 269-298), making clear that there was more fact than rhetoric in the Pope's statement that he collected books for the world of scholarship. We must not, however, think of the Vaticana as a public library.

The learned Platina was an excellent librarian, who presided over the establishment of the Pope's books in four commodious rooms located between the (present) Cortili del Papagallo and del Belvedere. Whether the energetic Platina talked Sixtus IV into the expenditure of the large sums,

over whose disbursements he presided and of which he kept such detailed and interesting accounts, I do not know. Platina, who was appointed in February, 1475, had three assistants during this year, Pietro Demetrio, one Salvato Antonio, and a certain Giovanni, as well as a bookbinder also named Giovanni. He seems to have taken good care of them, for entries in his accounts record: "On 13 September, 1475, I gave one ducat to the writer Salvato to buy shoes. I also spent eight ducats by order of his Holiness on a suit for the writer Salvato, who was half-naked and cold. . . . I spent two ducats for the lining of the librarian Salvato's suit on 6 October, 1475" (Müntz and Fabre, 148). As chief librarian Platina received 10 ducats a month, 120 a year, and his three assistants variously called *scriptores*, *lectores*, *librarii*, or *custodes* each received only one ducat a month, which was also the bookbinder's salary. Demetrio's promotion in 1481 earned him three ducats a month. If the salaries were low, it must be noted that all the librarians had living quarters in the library, 12 ducats' worth of furniture and linen being purchased for them in December, 1476 (*op. cit.*, 137-138, 148-151), and Platina at least had other sources of income: in the Vatican Archives, for example, there is a document dated 16 June, 1472, written in a beautiful humanist hand (Reg. Vat. 554, fols. 143^r - 144^v), appointing Platina to the position of treasurer of the church of Famagusta in Cyprus, and of course he is known to have had a number of other preferments.

Sixtus IV enjoyed spending money on both buildings and books after the fashion of his great predecessor Nicholas V, who was still seeking on his death bed to justify both the buildings and the books. Of course there were complaints concerning these expenditures; there are always those who will complain about the cost of libraries. Perhaps the classic complaint is to be found in Seneca, whose text neither Nicholas V nor Sixtus IV could regard as in any way relevant to their activities as book collectors, because they sought books for serious purposes, while Seneca was merely assailing the practitioners of pretentious display (*De tranquillitate animi*, 9, 4-7):

Spending money on even the most dignified studies can be justified only so long as it is kept within reason. Why have countless books and libraries when the owner hardly reads their titles during his whole lifetime? Such a mass of books just overwhelms the student and doesn't teach him anything; it is far better to devote yourself to a few authors

than to wander aimlessly through many. Forty thousand books were burned at Alexandria. Let somebody else praise [such a library] as a glorious monument of royal wealth, like Titus Livius [presumably in his lost book CXII], who says that it was the finest expression of the good taste and culture of the Ptolemies. The fact is, it showed neither good taste nor culture, merely a bookish extravagance—not even bookish since they had collected their library not for study but for display, just like a good many people without even a child's knowledge of literature to whom books are not the implements of learning but decorations for the dining room. Get books enough, then, but none to put on a show. Ah, but you say it is more becoming to spend large sums this way than on Corinthian ware and on paintings. Any kind of excess is wrong. What can you say for a man trying to get book-cases [*armaria*] of citrus wood and ivory, collecting whole sets of unknown or discredited authors, and then just yawning in the midst of so many thousands of books? Most of his pleasure comes from the looks and titles of his volumes. In the homes of the most pretentious idlers you'll see all the orations and histories there are, with bookshelves [*loculamenta*] built right up to the ceiling, for by now like bathrooms and hot running water a library is got up as standing equipment for a fine house. I could certainly pardon a man if he were led astray by an excessive zeal for his studies. But as it is, these collections, the works of inspired geniuses decked out with their portraits, are put together for show and to dress up the walls.

The generations that followed Nicholas V and Sixtus IV witnessed the activities of many distinguished book collectors and library builders in Rome who paid no more heed than they to Seneca's spirited complaint. In the later sixteenth century (1587-1589) Sixtus V sacrificed the great sweep of Bramante's courtyard by erecting the present Vaticana in its center, and from this time on a number of very important libraries were established in Rome which are still rich repositories despite their loss of many manuscripts, books, and works of art in the general expropriation of ecclesiastical properties by the Italian government in the latter part of the last century. Chief among these new library foundations were the Vallicelliana, associated with the memories and containing the books of St. Philip Neri, Achille Stazio, Cesare Baronio, Odorico Rinaldi, and Leone Allacci; the Angelica, of which its founder, the Augustinian Angelo Rocca, made the only real public library in Rome in the years just before and after 1600; the Alessandrina, which Alexander VII (d. 1667) established as the first general library of the University of Rome; the Casanatense, founded by the Cardinal Girolamo Casanate (d. 1700), scene of the labors

of Fr. Alberto Guglielmotti, historian of the papal navy; and finally the Corsiniana, which owes its origin to Clement XII Corsini's love of books and to that of his nephew, the Cardinal Neri (d. 1770), who set up the library in the fine palace on the Via della Lungara where it is still located. Rome is not only a city of historic monuments but of historic libraries also, to which must be added the great Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale (Vittorio Emanuele II), now unfortunately closed because of the insecurity of the building, the old Roman College built by Gregory XIII in the ninth decade of the sixteenth century. In the environs of the city are the library of the Greek monastery of Grottaferata, of which the famous Bessarion was made protector and overseer by Pius II in 1463, and the seminary library of Frascati, which contains the books of the Cardinal of York, known in some quarters as "King Henry IX" of England, who died in 1807.

Excellent as the Roman libraries were, they were hard to use. Only the Casanatense acquired a good catalogue during the eighteenth century (and that only through the letter L), provided by the industry of its learned librarian, Fr. G. B. Audifreddi (d. 1794). The Princes Corsini were generous in opening the doors of their library on the Via della Lungara, but it was often very difficult for the unknown scholar to get access to the chief collections in Rome. When finally he got into the library, the catalogues were utterly impossible, as they were in most important libraries of the time, including the Bibliothèque du Roi in Paris. The Vaticana was no exception. In this connection one Robert Hannay, Esq., appearing before the select committee of the British House of Commons investigating the conduct of affairs in the British Museum in 1836 (and seeking a comparison with the situation which obtained in other large libraries), was asked in the session of 9 June: "What are the facilities which you have experienced in the Vatican library as to the days and hours of admission, and the number of books or of manuscripts which you could obtain?" His answer was:

I have read manuscripts and books there, but I soon found that the difficulty of obtaining either was so great that I was compelled to abandon study, though I had peculiar advantages, my private tutor in Italian, Signor Sozzi, being the under-librarian of the Vatican, a respectable and learned man; such, however, was its disorder from want of catalogues, and so little is it the desire or the design of the Papal government to make it useful that hardly anybody

resorts to the Vatican library for study (*Parl. Papers* 195: 418-419).

While it is reassuring to know that the under-librarian of the Vaticana was respectable as well as learned, we may recall that the papacy, not yet recovered from the attacks of Napoleon, had been plunged into the political maelstrom of 1830-1831, and that Gregory XVI, however lacking as a politician, was a generous patron of scholarship, and presumably his government possessed the desire if not the design of making the library useful. But time has wrought wonderful changes in the Vaticana, much assisted by the great interest of Leo XIII and Pius XI; the other libraries in the city have also been much improved; and in our day almost every humanist desires sooner or later to make the academic pilgrimage to Rome.

Although in the present paper I shall confine myself to western Europe and the United States, every student of the long history of libraries knows he can find abundant fact and detailed bibliographies in Fritz Milkau and Georg Leyh's valuable *Handbuch der Bibliothekswissenschaft* 3, pts. 1-2: *Geschichte der Bibliotheken*, Wiesbaden, 1955-1957, to which Milkau himself and Josef Schawe, Carl Wendel and Willi Göber, Viktor Burr and Kurt Holter have contributed the initial chapters, on libraries in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, the Greek city-states and the Hellenistic kingdoms, under the Roman republic and empire, as well as in the Byzantine and Islamic worlds.

The Graeco-Roman world seems to us much more bookish than it actually was; we know it mostly in relation to its books which were very largely written by an intellectual élite living in the cities. The archaeologists have corrected and expanded our earlier views by supplying us with an abundance of Greek papyri from Egypt and the most varied finds from Athens, Latin inscriptions from the Rhineland and a whole city at Ostia, and so on, but ancient education was for the most part literary, and the literature of Greece and that of Rome are always the chief tools of the classical archaeologists themselves. Books and buildings are by and large the chief legacies which one century leaves to the next, and they are oddly combined in the history of libraries. We have a fair knowledge of ancient libraries and a much more extensive knowledge of those in the Middle Ages. Years ago Theodor Gottlieb

collected large numbers of medieval-library catalogues in his valuable book *Über mittelalterliche Bibliotheken*, and his work has been continued in the great series of *Mittelalterliche Bibliothekskataloge*, which (as far as it has got) seeks to provide us with the full texts of the catalogues of libraries dispersed centuries ago.² Only a few manuscripts survive of the millions which once existed during the more than ten centuries that constitute the history of Graeco-Roman antiquity. We may not be sure whether Julius Caesar's siege of Alexandria in 48-47 B.C. did or did not result in the burning of 40,000 books, the lowest estimate given by any ancient author (*Handb. d. Bibliothekswissenschaft* 3-1: pp. 75-76), but one may very well doubt that 120,000 books were burned in the imperial library in Constantinople during Basiliscus' revolt in A.D. 475, as the historian John Zonaras (XIV,2) reports in the twelfth century (*cf. ibid.* 3-1, 149). In any event the library has a long and distinguished past, and there is an inevitable connection between the past and the future, for the length of the one usually betokens the length of the other.

Most modern library buildings are more functional and likely to be less beautiful than those constructed in earlier times, but they contain much the same kinds of books, collected and employed for the same purposes. The book has been with us for a long time, from the clay tablets of Nineveh and Nippur, the rolls of Herculaneum, the papyri of Oxyrhynchus, and the legal and literary codices of the third and fourth centuries. It will be with us for a long time to come, despite various forms of microfilm and microprint, no one of which can yet be used with the comfort or convenience of the book. When printing with movable types was first successfully employed for book production in the middle of the fifteenth century, the so-called Gutenberg (or 42-line) Bible was the printer's first spectacular success. It is still one of the handsomest books ever made; in five hundred years the techniques of book production have changed surprisingly little. One would think that anyone but a fool would prefer the far superior printed text to the almost in-

evitable uncertainties and inaccuracies of the most beautiful manuscripts, and yet many scholars who were far from fools preferred the poorer to the better form of book. Learned works sometimes circulated in manuscript even into the eighteenth century, such as, for example, the Abbé François Hédelin d'Aubignac's well-known dissertation on the Iliad (written in 1664, it did not appear in print until 1715), and sometimes the *philosophes* of the Enlightenment preferred for reasons of their own to read one another's works in manuscript. There were bibliophiles in the later fifteenth century who refused to admit printed books into their libraries, despite their manifest superiority for purposes of study, and if many readers were slow to show a preference for the printed book over the manuscript, we may be sure that it will take no little time for microfilm and the microcard to displace the book if indeed they ever do.

Every scholar seizes with eagerness a desired text in some microphotographic form when he cannot get access to the manuscript or printed book itself, but no one who does research will believe that he would do so if he had access to the original from which the copy was made. (The most conspicuous exception is the newspaper which is generally more conveniently read in microfilm than in its bulky format and often crumbling paper.) C. M. Briquet, in his remarkable dictionary of *Les Filigranes*, lists more than 16,000 water marks on European paper produced between the later thirteenth century and the seventeenth. Many a medievalist and early modern historian has found his data of great value, but you cannot determine a water mark from a microfilm; palaeographical studies can rarely be done from any form of microreproduction, and naturally most differences of ink, colors in miniatures, and the like are inevitably lost. We all expect much of microphotography, however, and I hope some day to be able to carry home the more than ten dozen heavy volumes of the *Monumenta Germaniae historica* in a small box which will also contain an effective reading machine. Maybe I shall be able to put the whole *Monumenta* on the night stand beside my bed, flash the texts on a specially prepared wall or ceiling, and turn from the German annals of the Saxon era in Volume III of the *Scriptores* to the text of, let us say, Aubrey of Trois-Fontaines in Volume XXIII by the mere flick of a lever. It may be that the final solution to the still awkward

² Publication unfortunately proceeds very slowly: *Mittelalterliche Bibliothekskataloge: Österreich* 1, by Th. Gottlieb, Vienna, Holzhausen, 1915 (no more published); *Deutschland u. die Schweiz* 1-3, by Paul Lehmann and Paul Ruf, Munich, Beck, 1918-1939 (actually only a modest start on a vast project). The "union catalogue" was well known to the later Middle Ages (*Handb. d. Bibliothekswissenschaft* 3-1: pp. 275-276).

problem of reading microphotographic reproductions will take some form that no one has yet thought of, but I suspect it will be wise for the Universities of Chicago, Cornell, and Pennsylvania to reserve space adjacent to their still unbuilt libraries for the addition of second and even third units twenty-five and fifty years after the completion of their new buildings. However expensive learned books may be to print and scholarly libraries to maintain, we had best recognize that they both promise to go on into a future that may well prove as lengthy as their past.

One hardly knows where to begin the continuous history of the medieval and modern library. We could go back to the library regulations of the Rule of St. Pachomius, who established cenobitism in the early fourth century among the pious refugees from life who sought salvation in the remote quiet of the Egyptian Thebaid. The librarian ranked second in the community, or at least the *secundus* had charge of the books. St. Benedict prescribed reading as well as manual labor to combat the idleness which got monks as well as other people into trouble. In the revived Benedictine monachism of the Cluniac Reform, the precentor was also the librarian (*armarius*), and on the second day of Lent the books assigned to each brother the preceding year were returned in full assembly in the chapter house: According to the Ancient Customs of Cluny (I, 52), "When each brother is called by name, he rises and returns the book given to him [the previous year], and should it happen that he has not read it through, he asks pardon for his lack of diligence." The Benedictine houses treasured their manuscripts which could not be sold or given away, and could only be loaned against a deposit of equal or larger value than the book borrowed. The Carthusians who lived in the detached silence of their own cells, workrooms, and studies had an especial veneration of books, "as being the everlasting food of our souls," in the words of the twelfth-century prior Guigo I, *tanquam sempiternus animarum nostrarum cibus*, and since they could not preach the word of God in public, they reproduced it in their books (Migne, *Patr. latina* 153: 693-694). The Cistercians, Augustinians, and Premonstratensians were no less vigilant in the enlargement and maintenance of their libraries, and their custumals contain detailed provisions for the circulation and recall, shelving and repair of their books.

By modern standards of course medieval libraries were very small, ranging from some hundreds of volumes in the chief Benedictine monasteries on the continent in the ninth and tenth centuries to about 2,000 volumes in the large library of Christ Church, Canterbury, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Although individual collectors like Niccolò Niccoli, the Medici, Bessarion, Federigo da Montefeltro, Alfonso the Magnanimous, Matthias Corvinus, and others put together considerable libraries in the fifteenth century, the most phenomenal growth occurs in the Vaticana. Owing to the vicissitudes of papal fortune, the earlier library of Boniface VIII with its thirty-three Greek manuscripts as well as the great bulk of the pontifical library at Avignon did not go into the Vaticana, and Müntz and Fabre (préf., 3-4) note that in 1443 during the reign of Eugenius IV the papal library contained only 340 books, of which two were in Greek. In 1455, however, upon the death of the great bibliophile Nicholas V, there were 1,209 volumes in the collection, of which 414 were in Greek, and when Sixtus IV died in 1484, the Vaticana contained about 3,650 volumes, of which perhaps as many as 1,000 were in Greek.³

Every monastery had a library, and from the later twelfth century at least the reliance of the brethren on their books was summarized in the oft-quoted adage *claustrum sine armario est quasi castrum sine armamentario* (Wattenbach, 430, 570), the bookless cloister is like an unfortified camp. The mendicants soon showed that they were no exception. The Dominicans were founded as a missionary order; their function was to teach and preach; learning was encouraged among them. But St. Francis of Assisi held books in disdain, and he wanted no libraries in Minorite convents. Less than a year after his death, his companion and confessor Fra Leone of Assisi told a delightful story about this antipathy to books, in the *Mirror of Perfection*, the first of the Franciscan "legends" (ed. Paul Sabatier, 11): When a novice, who could barely read, requested permission to keep a psalter, St. Francis refused him with the words, "When you get your psalter, you won't be satisfied, and you'll want a breviary. And after you have your breviary, you'll sit in a chair like a great prelate

³ Although Müntz and Fabre, 141, give a total of 1,160 manuscripts for Nicholas V's library at his death in 1455, Joseph Hilgers has shown that the collection actually contained 795 Latin manuscripts and 414 Greek manuscripts (*Centralblatt f. Bibliothekswesen* 19: 4-6, 1902).

and say to some brother, 'Friar, go and fetch me my breviary!'" St. Francis' views were not shared, however, by many of his successors; libraries were established in their convents; and like the Dominicans, they went as missionaries into the Levant where they even collected Greek and Arabic books.

From an early period libraries and scriptoria as well as schools were maintained in connection with both monastic and cathedral churches. In Italy there come to mind such famous names as those of Bobbio, St. Silvestro di Nonantola, Farfa, and Monte Cassino; Cremona, Ivrea, and Novara; Rome, Vercelli, and Verona. In Bavaria and Saxony, Lorraine and the Low Countries rich monasteries and episcopal cities treasured libraries that waxed and waned in size as peace obtained or war ravaged the lands of the German empire. One thinks inevitably of the famous libraries of Fulda, Reichenau, St. Gall, Corvey, Tegernsee, and St. Emmeram (in Regensburg); those at Hildesheim, Bamberg, and Freising; Prüm, Gorze, and Strasbourg, Cologne, Metz, and Toul; as well as at Liège, Stavelot, and Lobbes. We shall have numerous occasions to speak of English libraries in this paper. In France there were famous monastic libraries at Tours, Corbie, and St. Riquier, St. Bénigne in Dijon, St. Benoit-sur-Loire at Fleury, Cluny near Mâcon in Burgundy, St. Père de Chartres, at Bec, Fécamp, and St. Evroul in Normandy. France became a land of rich cities; a number of cathedral libraries prospered. From the time of Peter Abélard, Paris became the center of French learning, as it has since remained. There were several important libraries in Paris such as those in the monasteries of St. Victor and St. Germain des Prés. Where you could find monks you could also find books.

Social pressure and ecclesiastical discipline alike obliged the monks to lend their books not alone to other monasteries but also to private readers, and a canon of the Council of Paris in 1212 forbade, among other things, that religious should take any oath to the effect they would not lend their books when others had need of them, "since lending is to be accounted among the chief acts of mercy . . ." (J. D. Mansi, *Sacra Concilia* 22: 832). There is ample evidence that the monasteries allowed the wide circulation of their books, and from the sixteenth century on the Augustinians of St. Victor and the Benedictines of St. Germain des Prés opened the doors of their *armaria* after the fashion of public libraries on

certain days of the week. The widespread circulation of books made it necessary to chain reference books and other works which for one reason or another were not to leave the library. Many books were of course stolen and there is a whole literature of anathema pronounced against the miscreant who would rob a church or monastery of its books which were almost as cherished as relics and certainly more prized than rich vestments.

The monks' love of books has been well depicted in J. W. Clark's almost classic volume on *The Care of Books* (76-78) where prescriptions are given for the proper method of holding a manuscript: The left hand covered by the sleeve of the tunic should balance the book on the knees, the uncovered right hand being used to turn the pages. One should wash his hands before taking up a book. Although the handkerchief was the proper accoutrement of milady, a monk was allowed the use of one as a further protection in handling books. A fine manuscript was a pearl of great price; months or even years of exacting effort were required to produce it; three fingers held the pen, we are told by the Carolingian scribe Vuarembert, but the copyist's whole body had labored at his task—*calamus tribus digitis continetur, totum corpus laborat* (Delisle, 2: 121).

The Cistercians sometimes had their bookpress in the northeast corner of the cloister, near the entrance to the chapter house, which was commonly entered from the east walk of the cloister, and the corners of several chapter houses were converted into bookrooms to take care of the overflow of books which in time became too numerous for the press to hold. Edgar Lehmann has recently published a good study on the bookrooms in medieval German monasteries, *Die Bibliotheksräume der deutschen Klöster in Mittelalter*, with numerous instructive illustrations. Lehmann (3 ff.) takes issue with the account of J. W. Clark (80-84) concerning the extent to which monks read and wrote in the cloister, believing that Clark has too closely equated the Latin word *claustrum* with the English *cloister*, and so misinterpreted the texts upon which he bases his thesis that the *scriptorium* was actually located in the (sometimes glazed) cloister, which Lehmann believes was only occasionally the case. Lehmann may be right; it is a problem which further study will undoubtedly help to clarify. There can be no question that large bookrooms were found in some early monasteries, and that the monks did less literary work in the cloister

than Clark assumed. However this may be, the Benedictines installed wooden carrels along the north sides of the cloisters at Durham and Westminster where it is pleasant to think of the monks reading from early afternoon to evensong.

Along the south range of the cloister at Gloucester cathedral are twenty handsome stone carrels dating from the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Carrels are one of several contributions of the medieval monks to the modern research library; their present form and the general arrangement with which we are familiar today seem to be older than the mid-thirteenth century. In Old French and medieval Latin their name is rendered in various ways, *caroles*, *karoles*; *caroli*, *carolae*, *karulae*, etc.; and sometimes this word clearly means "desks" (cf. Wattenbach, 272-273), but I think the connection between carrel and desk is obvious, and perhaps Wattenbach is unduly puzzled by "*dieses rätselhafte Wort*." Canon B. H. Streeter (5) informs us that "it was in the well-lighted carrel in the cloister—not in dark 'cells' as is popularly supposed—that the monk read, copied and painted the beautiful illuminated MSS which we so much admire." This is of course Clark's picture, which Lehmann thinks is overdrawn, but no one who has ever examined either the script or illumination of a fine manuscript could possibly assume it had been produced in a dark cell.

Monastic libraries had much influence upon those established in the universities and of course the colleges. Various regulations concerning the use of books in the monasteries are found repeated in the statutes relating to college libraries. The same kind of furniture is found in both,

especially the long, sloping desks or lecterns (called *banchi*, *pulpita*, *foruli*, *deschi*, *analogia*, etc.), which were installed before windows equidistantly placed in long narrow rooms. To these desks the books were chained, and readers sat in rather stiff discomfort on benches; sometimes the desks were too high for the reader to be seated, and he had to study standing. If this seems strange, we must recall that physical comfort was less cherished in the Middle Ages than today, and B. H. Streeter (16) cites the charming example from a Chinese classic of the ideal scholar who tied his queue to an overhead beam, so that if he should doze off, the immediate tug on his hair would awaken him.

Obviously the tonsured clerk in the west could employ no such device, but in all periods of the Middle Ages most readers presumably sat rather than stood before their books. Indeed the individual scholar who could afford it might sit in a study equipped with some of the most ingenious devices ever designed to add convenience to reading and writing. For a moment we may leave the library with its rigid lectern system to note a few of these devices. A movable desk might be attached to a heavy chair, extending from one arm to the other, and the student could have several books within easy reach on a reading stand with two or three decks, the heights of which were adjustable. The desk, whether in any way attached to the chair or not, often swung on a heavy iron bracket, and was commonly provided with holes into which ink-horns could be inserted, sometimes several inkhorns when three or four different colors had to be employed. The desk also had special holes for holding quill pens and might even have a horizontal slit into which an overlong page could be fed whence the writer reclaimed the page line by line as he covered its upper portion. There were swinging brackets from which lanterns might be suspended, devices to hold candles, and special weights to keep stiffly bound volumes open. Bookcases, drawers, and small cupboards, constructed as part of either the desk or chair, held reference books and other materials which the author or copyist would inevitably need in the course of his day's work.

The scribe's desk was set at a sharp vertical angle, almost like a painter's easel; his job was a tiring one, back-breaking and a fearful strain on the eyes. In his right hand he held a quill pen, and in the left a knife to sharpen the quill,

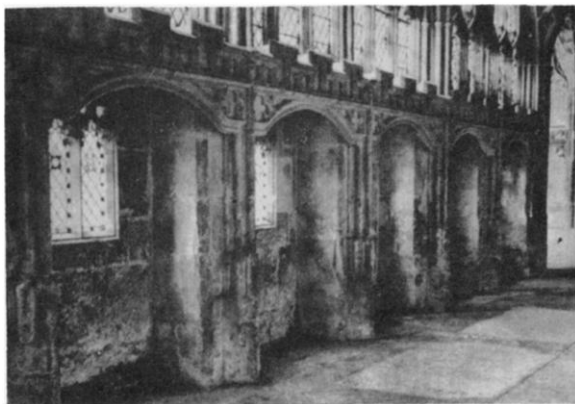


FIG. 1. Five of the twenty stone carrels on the south side of the great cloister (about 1400), at Gloucester Cathedral.

make erasures, and remove rough spots from the parchment. There are manuscripts from the thirteenth century with letters of incredible minuteness and almost supernal perfection. But the scribe paid a terrible price and ended many a manuscript with eloquent complaint. A few pages a day were generally the best speed a calligrapher could attain, and a thirteenth-century scribe notes with unseemly jollity in the legal text he had copied, *Est sepultus qui incepit: Semper vivat qui perfecit* (Wattenbach, 510). It is no wonder that when poor old St. Martin of Leon, about the year 1200, wanted to finish an important work he had recourse to a device which his biographer records with evident appreciation: Martin kept his shoulders from sagging over the task and kept his hands poised over the wax tablets on which he was writing by means of ropes suspended from the ceiling (*PL* 208, 16).

Some sympathy is certainly owing to readers who had to work year after year in libraries fitted out under the lectern system, which was the usual form the larger library took in the later Middle Ages. This stiff arrangement could hardly have arisen as a consequence of the study habits of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Twenty or even more lecterns or desks from about six to ten feet long, with fixed benches set before them, were placed in front of equidistant windows on either side of a long room. A narrow aisle usually went down the center of the room between the banks of lecterns; one is a bit reminded of the gangway between the banks of oars in a medieval "trireme"; and indeed the readers' desks and the rowers' benches were both called *banchi*. The books were chained to the desks, for a manuscript might well be worth more than a house, and was more easily concealed and stolen. More than one text attests the difficulties encountered by students who wished to consult two or three adjoining books. A famous example of the lectern system, dating from the later sixteenth century, is preserved in the church of St. Peter and St. Walpurga at Zutphen in Holland, representing a familiar form of library organization which had earlier been used at Merton College, Oxford, at Wells Cathedral, and elsewhere; still more primitive forms of the lectern system once obtained in the library which Bishop Cobham built at Oxford University about 1320 over the old congregation house at St. Mary's; at Lincoln Cathedral (1419-1426); and at All Souls, Oxford, where the library dates



FIG. 2. Lecterns in the library of the Church of St. Peter and St. Walpurga at Zutphen in Holland (1563-1564).

from 1438. The lectern system was also employed at Oxford in Duke Humphrey of Gloucester's library, which was finally completed in 1480 (Macray, 7-8), but there is no need to mention further examples, for it was widely used both in England and on the continent.

The stall system provided a more economical use of space. In this system the lecterns were fitted into the ancient bookpresses or *armaria*, which were arranged at right angles to the wall on either side of a broad window, forming reading alcoves and providing some of the privacy of the old monastic carrel. Indeed, combining as it did the chief advantages of lectern, bookpress, and carrel, the stall system enjoyed a long vogue at Oxford, and is still employed in various modified forms in many modern libraries. The books were of course still chained. In the lectern system the books had lain flat on the desks, and now as the stall system was adopted, they still (I suspect) lay flat on the shelves of the presses. Books were placed horizontally on the shelves of the new Vaticana built by Sixtus V in the later sixteenth century. Books in fact rarely stood upright, as

on our modern shelves, until the seventeenth century. The stalls, called by various names (*staulla*, *stauli*, *stallae*, *desce*, etc.), were certainly far more common in England than anywhere on the continent. In Italy, for example, the lectern system seems to have remained in fashion until the early seventeenth century. It was of course employed in the old Vaticana, and is depicted in a well-known fresco showing Sixtus IV in his library, in the Corsia Sistina at the Hospital of the Holy Spirit in Rome. The best surviving examples of the lectern system in Italy are to be found in the Biblioteca Malatestiana at Cesena (built in 1452) and the Laurenziana in Florence (finished in 1571).

The stall system was first so named by J. W. Clark (172–198), who erroneously dated its origin to the fourteenth century while Canon Streeter (42, 49, 50, 170) placed its first appearance at Magdalen College, Oxford, about 1480. According to N. P. Ker, however, "all college libraries in Oxford and Cambridge were on the lectern system until 1590" (470–471), when the stall system was first set up at Merton, and thereafter at St. John's, All Souls, and Queen's in the following decade (*ibid.*, 507 ff.). Ker may be right, but possibly not for the reasons he gives.⁴

⁴ Ker, Oxford College libraries, 472, 507–508, agrees with Streeter, *The chained library*, 136–142, on the date (1589–1590) for the installation of the stalls in the (older) west wing of the Merton library, but agrees with him on little else. According to Ker (511), "New College went over to stalls in 1602–3 and the next three years, Corpus in 1604, Magdalen in 1610 and 1611 . . . , and Christ Church in 1611," but the evidence he gives with respect to Corpus is not very convincing. The case of Corpus is important because of its apparent bearing upon the history of the library fittings at Magdalen. According to the building accounts (of March, 1517) of the Corpus library, which after the chapter library at Hereford best preserves its old form, the college contracted with the builder "ffor the makyng off the dextis in the library, to the summe of xvi, after the maner and fforme as they be in Magdaleyn college, except the popie heedis off the seitis . . ." (cited by Clark, 172; Streeter, 150; Ker, 471). Apparently the fellows of Corpus did not like the poppy-head crests at the ends of the library seats at Magdalen, and today the ends of the library seats at Corpus rise into simple, round knobs. If the stalls now at Corpus are in fact those which were built in 1517, as Streeter believes and Ker denies, they were obviously modelled after earlier ones installed at Magdalen about 1480 when William of Waynflete built the Magdalen library. (Magdalen remained a chained library until 1799 when the stalls, benches, and chains were unfortunately all discarded together.) The crucial question therefore is whether the stalls now at Corpus date from 1517. Ker believes that



FIG. 3. Lecterns designed by Michelangelo in the Biblioteca Laurenziana in Florence. Alinari photo.

At any rate the famous stalls at Hereford Cathedral are now known to date not from the fourteenth century, but from the late sixteenth, very likely being built in 1590 also, when the library was removed from the cloister to the Lady Chapel, and clearly supplied the model for stalls in the Bodleian a decade later. In both the lectern and stall systems the books were chained to long iron rods which were held in place by hinged hasps nailed to the sides of the presses. Although there were many variations in the details of these fittings, the basic method of chaining was almost everywhere the same. Although in most libraries a fair proportion of the books was probably

the Corpus catalogue of 1589, "is manifestly not a catalogue of a library arranged on the stall system, unless we are to suppose that each stall was three-quarters empty" (471). But Ker assumes that the introduction of the stall system meant the books, which had hitherto lain flat on the desks in the earlier lectern system, now suddenly stood upright on the shelves (470–471, 507). If, however, the books continued to lie flat, the Corpus stalls would not have been three-quarters empty, and the books could quite properly have been "chained from the middle of the lower edge of the front cover" (471). Ker notes that "no books standing on a shelf could be chained thus"; quite so, but if the books lay flat, the objections disappear. How can we be sure that most of the books did not lie flat on the (original) two shelves of the presses in the stalls at both Magdalen and Corpus (*cf.* Streeter, 49–50, 170)? It is conceivable that most of the books at Corpus were not stood upright until 1604 when the library was reorganized and at least partially rebuilt, and new locks, bars, and longer chains were needed, the model for the change being presumably the three-decker stall system recently set up by Sir Thomas Bodley in Duke Humphrey's library.

always unchained, the practice of chaining lasted a long time; it was made gradually less necessary, however, as the printing press supplied books in sufficient quantity to make much easier the replacement of stolen or damaged items.

Despite the printing press, books remained expensive. The tradition continued strong in the Oxford colleges, nevertheless, that books were acquired by gift rather than by purchase. Although the system (or lack thereof) is said to have worked well for the fifteenth century, it did not suffice for the sixteenth, especially after the bibliographical pogroms of the so-called Reformation. In the middle of the sixteenth century both Oriel and Merton were driven to the dire expedient of selling silver plate to raise money for books (Ker, 468, 481-484), and "Trinity probably spent more on feasting the Bishop of Winchester on 2 August, 1576, than on the library in forty-five years" (*ibid.*, 469). Appeals went out of course for money with which to buy books, and academic libraries have been sending out such appeals ever since. Theft and the unauthorized removal of

books from the library were still serious problems and still solved by chaining.

It is well known that the chaining of books lasted by and large about a century and a half longer at Oxford than at Cambridge. When Bishop John Williams of Lincoln, lord keeper of the privy seal, built the handsome library of St. John's College at Cambridge (1624-1628), he made no provision at all for chaining the books, while as late as 1751 Bodley's librarian was still ordering chains for his books, and the books at Magdalen College, Oxford, were not unchained until 1799. Contemplating this remarkable difference in practice, Canon Streeter (70-72, 206-207) was unwilling to dispute whether it resulted "because at Cambridge the standard of honesty was higher or the love of books less."⁵

Our tendency to think of "walls lined with bookcases" makes it almost hard to believe that the first great libraries in which bookcases were permanently fixed to the walls were the sixteenth-century Escorial outside Madrid, the early seventeenth-century Ambrosiana in Milan, and the "Arts End" of the Bodleian at Oxford. This is the wall system, which often employs the space all the way up to a high ceiling, the books in the upper half of the room being made accessible by a gallery or by ladders. The books stand upright on the shelves instead of lying flat as in the lectern and (I think) earlier form of the stall system. Modern libraries have of course tried to solve the perennial problem of housing the ever increasing numbers of books by huge stack areas on special floors, in tall towers, or in great annexes, for the wisdom of Ecclesiastes (12:12) knew well the plight of librarians, and of making many books there is no end. One might add that much cataloguing is a weariness of the flesh.

Although, as Edgar Lehmann (4-5) has observed, special rooms and even buildings were occasionally given over to monastic libraries in the earlier Middle Ages, the fifteenth century was preeminently the period of library construction in Europe. A number of historic rooms were now built to accommodate the monks' large collections of manuscripts, often above a cloister if the walls would bear the weight. Such rooms were built at Christ Church, Canterbury, and Christ's Hospital, London; at Gloucester, Durham, and Winchester; at Cîteaux and

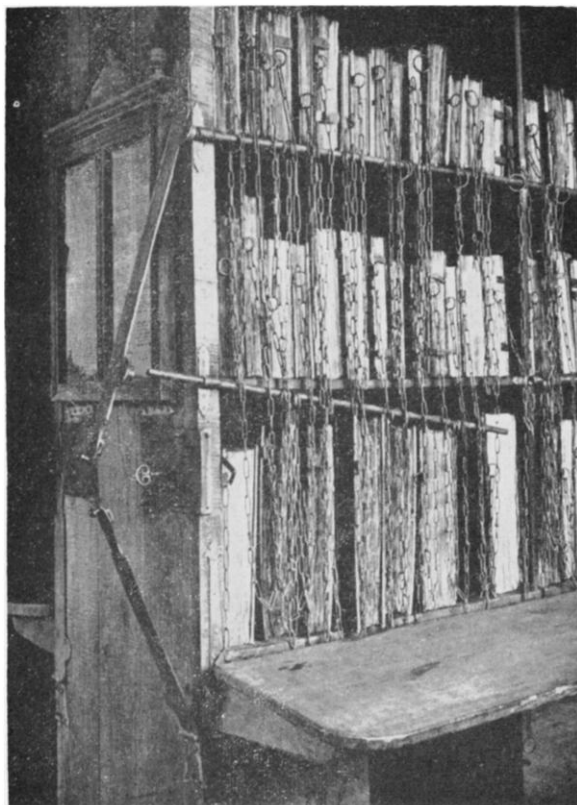


FIG. 4. Book press with chained books at Hereford, the hasps being opened to remove chains from the rod.

⁵ Actually books retained their chains in the library of King's College until 1777, but this was quite without parallel at Cambridge.



FIG. 5. The west wing of the library at Merton College, Oxford. From *Medieval England* edited by Austin Lane Poole (Clarendon Press, Oxford).

Clairvaux in Burgundy; and at St. Victor and St. Germain des Prés in Paris. Cathedral libraries were similarly provided for, those at Lincoln, Salisbury, Wells, and Hereford having rooms built over a cloister, and those at York, Noyon, Bayeux, Rouen, and Troyes being separate structures detached from church or cloister. Monastic and cathedral chapters, members of colleges and the officials of the universities, popes and kings and princes not only collected books and made them available to selected portions of the learned world, but now began to build often splendid structures to house them. Monastic library regulations were imitated by the colleges, which also had an annual inventory and distribution of books. Like the monasteries, most colleges did not possess either special rooms or buildings for their books until the fifteenth century. A number of miniatures in manuscripts show the monk of this era at work in the privacy of his own room and the university lecturer citing his texts directly from the revolving book stand before him, views of a comfortable world which

the sixteenth century largely destroyed in England, Germany, and France.

In England the suppression of the monasteries was accompanied by the widespread destruction of images in churches and chapels. Some eight hundred monasteries were done away with in the fourth decade of the sixteenth century; dozens of important libraries disappeared, and thousands of priceless manuscripts were apparently burned or used by butchers, fishmongers, green grocers, and the like for wrapping up their wares. Even if the vivid picture which John Bale has painted of these losses is exaggerated (in the foreword to *The Laboryouse Journey and Serche of Johan Leylande for Englandes Antiquitees . . .*, London, 1549), few would dispute that they were severe. At first Oxford and Cambridge, as well as certain of the cathedrals, retained their collections of books, but what we may perhaps call the library system of medieval England was completely ruined in that senseless fury which marred forever the beauty of most English churches, and within a few years the university libraries were also dismantled. At Oxford, Duke Humphrey of Gloucester's fine collection of manuscripts was destroyed, and since the lecterns and seats were no longer necessary, the university sold them from the handsome room which Humphrey as chancellor of the university had agreed to build over the divinity school. Almost half a century was to pass before Sir Thomas Bodley refitted the room for use (on the stall system) and filled it again with books (in 1598–1602).

Despite numerous physical discomforts, the atmosphere of the early seventeenth-century library was generally conducive to scholarship. Librarians had few personnel problems, and could concentrate on the buying and reading of books. Whereas in most modern research libraries of any considerable size, more than seventy-five per cent of the budget goes into salaries and general maintenance, and less than twenty-five per cent into books, in 1605 only 14 pence ("xiii d.") had to be expended "for rubbing the librarie," i.e. for cleaning the books, at Corpus Christi College, Oxford (Streeter, 169). Collections were still relatively small, and even in well-run libraries the costs of housekeeping were apparently very slight. When in 1639 extra help was needed for cleaning in the Bodleian, "fourpence a week are paid to a poor woman and her daughter for sweeping" (Macray, 89), and in 1661 forty shillings a year were to be provided

"for sweeping the [Selden] library" in the Bodleian (*ibid.*, 128). Librarians did not yet have to wrestle with annual budgets, for they belong to a more modern era (Thyregod, 22-24). For the few persons who had easy access to a good library, it was doubtless a fine place in which to live and work although, it must be acknowledged, the lack of heating was everywhere a severe trial in the winter. In 1605, when King James I visited the library which Bodley had set up at Oxford, he is said to have declared that if he were not a king, he would wish to be a university man, and if he had to be a prisoner, he would desire no other prison than the Bodleian where he might be chained together with so many great authors (Macray, 33).

Preferring the majestic folio to the puny octavo, Sir Thomas Bodley entertained some robust prejudices as to what types of books might properly be allowed a place on the shelves of his new library at Oxford. In January, 1612, he wrote an oft-quoted letter to Thomas James, the first keeper of the Bodleian:

I can see no good reason to alter my opinion, for excluding suche bookes, as almanackes, plaies, and an infinit number that are daily printed of very unworthy maters, and handling suche as, me thinkes, both the keeper and underkeeper should disdaine to seeke out, to deliver unto any man. Happely some plaies may be worthy the keeping; but hardly one in fortie.

Some dramas in foreign languages, he conceded, might be worthwhile

for learning the languages, and many of them compiled by men of great fame for wisdom and learning, which is seeldom or never seene among us. Were it so againe that some litle profit might be reaped (which God knowes is very litle) out of some of our playbookes, the benefit thereof will nothing neere contravaille the harme that the scandal will bring into the Librarie when it shalbe given out that we stuffe it full of baggage bookes (*Ep.* 221, ed. G. W. Wheeler, Oxford, 1926).

This is undoubtedly the best known passage in Bodley's correspondence, and I have found it quoted in more than a dozen different places, perhaps the most interesting example of its citation being in an article in the old Washington, D. C., newspaper *National Intelligencer* for 14 April, 1852, in a discussion of how to restock the Library of Congress after the destructive fire of December, 1851 (W. D. Johnston, 1, 304-305). The hope is usually expressed of course that Sir Thomas may have thought the plays of his con-

temporary William Shakespeare were among those worth keeping. Despite Sir Thomas' aversion to such "baggage bookes," they were collected, especially in the century after his death, and in 1779 the actor David Garrick left a notable collection of English playbooks to the British Museum where in later years they were to be the favorite reading of Charles Lamb.

Sir Thomas Bodley was also of the opinion that the librarian of the Bodleian should remain celibate (*Ep.* 14, 45, and 52), as indeed the statutes provided until 1813 (Macray, 26). Despite the marked advance in the canons of library science since Bodley's day, librarianship has apparently become a less rigorous profession in other respects. Even so, it must be acknowledged that Sir Thomas did finally allow his first librarian, James, to marry:

For although to tell yow truly I did neuer nothing more vnwillingly, then my self to become the first breaker of my owne Institution, which I purpose heerafter shall stand inuiolable, yet for the loue that I beare to yow in particular, I had rather incurre a publike note of defectiue proceeding, then that yow should falle, by my stifnesse, into termes of extremitie (*Ep.* 45).

Sir Thomas' decision was wise. James was a good librarian, anxious to see the books put to use, especially by young scholars (Thyregod, 15-17).

Despite the lamentable destructiveness which had attended the suppression of the monasteries, there were many currents in the intellectual life of England in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that were to converge in the foundation of a national museum and a national library to assemble and preserve the cultural treasures of the past. Ecclesiastical, historical, and humanistic interests underlay the collections of books and manuscripts put together by Archbishop Parker, William Camden, Sir Robert Cotton, Arundel, and the Harleys, but the learned membership of the Royal Society, which received a charter from Charles II in 1662, and that of the second Society of Antiquaries, established in 1717, entertained the widest interests, and these finally found their chief embodiment in the British Museum, which opened its doors to select groups of visitors and readers on 15 January, 1759. Members of both societies were among the first trustees of the Museum. It so happens that apparently the first two Americans admitted to the reading room of the Museum were both Philadelphians, Dr.



FIG. 6. The library of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, looking east.

[Samuel?] Young in December, 1764, and the Rev. Thomas Coombe five years later (Barwick, 36), the latter of whom became a member of the American Philosophical Society a few years afterwards. In December, 1780, John Wesley visited the reading room and the natural history collections in the Museum, which he found very interesting, "but what account," he was moved to ask, "will a man give to the Judge of quick and dead for a life spent in collecting these?" (*ibid.*, 46). What indeed? The question never bothered Henry Manning, Samuel Wilberforce, Nicholas Wiseman, and a good many other divines. William Cobbett, who is alleged to have described the British Museum as the "old curiosity shop at Bloomsbury," opposed a grant of 16,000 pounds for the upkeep of the Museum in March, 1833: "He would ask of what use in the wide world was this British Museum, and to whom, to what class of persons, it was useful? . . . If the aristocracy wanted the Museum as a lounging place, let them pay for it. For his own part, he did not know where this British Museum was nor did he know much of the contents of it" (*ibid.*, 74). For the first seventy-five years or so the

museum aspect predominated over that of the library. Even the remarkable collections of manuscripts acquired by gift and purchase could hardly compete for attention with the spectacular exhibitions of Egyptian, Greek, and Roman antiquities, and so it is not strange that the department of printed books failed to keep pace with other departments.

On 7 June, 1836, Mr. (later Sir) Anthony Panizzi, then an assistant in printed books and professor of Italian in the newly founded University of London, informed a select committee of enquiry of the House of Commons:

Public opinion is exercised only upon one of the purposes for which the British Museum was instituted: that is upon its establishment as a show place. Unfortunately as to its most important and most noble purpose, as an establishment for the furtherance of education, for study and research, the public seem to be almost indifferent (*Parl. Papers* 195: 407).

The perennial question had already been discussed in the committee whether the acquisition of common books or rare ones was the primary purpose of the library, and Panizzi had answered,

I think, considering the British Museum to be a national library for research, its utility increases in proportion with the very rare and costly books in preference to modern books. . . . I think that scholars have a right to look for these expensive works to the government of the country. . . .

Was it, then, he was asked, a very secondary object to get for the library, if it could be done, a full supply of all modern British and foreign works? "I would not say a very secondary object," he responded:

but if I am to choose, I would say that it is of less importance for the library of the British Museum to have common modern books than to have rare, ephemeral, voluminous and costly publications, which cannot be found anywhere else by persons not having access to great private collections. I want a poor student to have the same means of indulging his learned curiosity, of following his rational pursuits, of consulting the same authorities, of fathoming the most intricate inquiry, as the richest man in the kingdom, as far as books go, and I contend that government is bound to give him the most liberal and unlimited assistance in this respect. I want the library of the British Museum to have books of both descriptions; I want an extra grant for those rare and costly books which we have not, and which cannot be bought but upon opportunities offering themselves. . . .

Panizzi recalled that Napoleon had promised the Bibliothèque du Roi in Paris 40,000 *l.*, and actu-

ally ordered 5,000 l. to be paid on account although subsequent political events prevented payment of the remainder: "Now when you have given three times as much (say 100,000 l. in 10 or 12 years), then you will begin to have a library worthy of the British nation, but not if you continue to go on as hitherto" (*Parl. Papers* 195: 391). I am well aware that the brief passages which I have just quoted from Panizzi's testimony have been quoted in the past, and you may be sure that they will be quoted in the future, for they are the high spots in the two ponderous volumes which contain the *Report from the Select Committee on [the] British Museum* (*Parl. Papers* 194-195). But there are other passages in Panizzi's testimony which recommend themselves also, such as his observations on book collecting by the Russian and French armies, the various plans and difficulties of classification, the pitfalls of ambitious schemes and attempted short cuts in cataloguing, the absurdities the Royal Society insisted upon incorporating in its "classed catalogue," the nuisance (I am reporting Panizzi) that scientific men always make of themselves, and the misfortune of having on hand meddling trustees like Sir Joseph Banks and (it would seem) Sir Humphrey Davy (both of whom were, incidentally, members of the American Philosophical Society). Panizzi's testimony had its effect. A year later he was appointed keeper of printed books, and twenty years later principal librarian of the British Museum (1856); to this Italian political exile, whose appointments to both posts were accompanied by chauvinistic protests, the Museum owes more than to any other administrator in the two centuries of its history.

There were of course many complaints directed against the administration of the British Museum. In 1848-1849 royal commissioners instituted the most detailed inquiries into the "constitution and management, etc., of the British Museum," and a remarkably interesting volume preserves the minutes of the evidence presented to them (*Parl. Papers* 196). We are here concerned only with the library. One disgruntled witness, Mr. Thomas Hudson Turner, complained that "there is a flea generated in that room [the old reading room on Montague Place] that is larger than any to be found elsewhere . . ." (*ibid.*, 408); although later on in the proceedings Panizzi showed "that Mr. Turner is given to great exaggeration" (630), he did not allude to this part of his testimony, and no further evidence was forthcoming

on this topic. Nevertheless, the "life or legend" of the museum flea persisted until the end of the century (Barwick, 93, 116). Sir Frederic Madden, then keeper of the manuscripts, appeared before the commission a number of times, and maintained, not without some reason, that the celebrity of the Museum in Europe rested chiefly upon the old Royal, the Cottonian, and the Harleian MSS. under his charge (*Parl. Papers* 196: 103, 105). Sir Frederic's testimony gives constant expression to his notorious dislike of Panizzi (Barwick, 107-111), in praise of whose knowledge and competence the American librarian Charles Coffin Jewett composed a long letter (dated 29 April, 1847). Panizzi modestly submitted the letter, written to the American bookseller Henry Stevens, as a document "of great importance" (*Parl. Papers* 196: 265-266). As the investigation went on, Panizzi defended his conduct of affairs in the department of printed books against much captious and sometimes malicious criticism. The Rev. Josiah Forshall, who had been secretary to the museum trustees for twenty years (and was a literary collaborator of Madden), was consistently hostile to Panizzi. Actually the celebrity of the British Museum was coming to rest upon the extraordinarily competent service in the reading room; Panizzi claimed that almost any book could be put into the hands of a reader in five minutes, wherever it might repose on more than a dozen miles of shelving! (253). In most libraries on the continent the reader made his desires known on one day, and returned the next to consult books which as often as not the librarians could not find.

Panizzi was under constant attack for his unyielding adherence to sound principles of cataloguing. Then as now most complaints came from those who knew least about the problem. Panizzi's system of full and accurate cataloguing was defended, however, by the famous Berlin bookseller, Adolphus Asher, scholar and linguist, and by Edward Edwards, then an assistant in printed books, whose important *Memoirs of Libraries* was to appear a decade later (2 vols., London, 1859). Several witnesses had wanted classed (i.e. subject) catalogues for the Museum's chief collections, and had said that short-title catalogues should be produced in the expeditious fashion in which booksellers made their catalogues, concerning which Asher informed the commission that this proposal would never do, for the two types of catalogues were sometimes

opposed to each other. When asked to clarify this statement, he replied:

That is rather entering into the secrets of trade; but, however, I have no objection to state it. For instance, we have a large chronicle having an immense long title, and which chronicle contains nothing but three or four lines on the discovery of America. We know at present that books on the discovery of America, containing any account of America, are widely purchased in America; then what do we do? We put one single word, the word "Chronicle," leave out all the remainder, and leave the words "on America." You will admit that that title, drawn up for any public library, ought to be drawn up on the exactly opposite principle (*Parl. Papers* 196: 439).

Obviously the bookseller's catalogue was neither a model nor an aid to quick, short-title cataloguing.

Panizzi's chief allies in defense of his (entirely modern) principles of cataloguing were Professor Augustus de Morgan, mathematician and historian of mathematics (*Parl. Papers* 196: 375 ff.), and John Winter Jones, who was to become principal librarian of the Museum in 1866: Jones supplied the data which demolished one of the chief critics of Panizzi's full and exact cataloguing (691 ff.). Although the commissioners had to return again and again to this troublesome subject, they also heard about crowded conditions, poor lighting, lack of adequate ventilation, and so on, conditions that were soon to be remedied by the construction of Panizzi's new library and reading room in 1854-1857.⁶ The librarians also had cause for

⁶ Before the mid-nineteenth century libraries were figuring prominently in the development of the new architectural theories which sought to use the new materials and techniques supplied by the Industrial Revolution. Panizzi's great circular reading room was his own idea. The plans for it were drawn by Sidney Smirke, architect of men's clubs and designer of their furnishings, who also produced the comfortable chairs with which some five generations of readers have associated the British Museum.

In France Henri Labrouste, chief advocate of the concept that "form should follow function," designed the library of St. Geneviève in Paris (1843-1850), the first important public building in Europe to have a completely iron framework from top to bottom as well as the first large structure in France designed as an entirely independent and self-sufficing library. Later on, Labrouste became the architect of the Bibliothèque Nationale, which was started in 1858. Directly behind the well lighted reading room with its familiar cast-iron columns, Labrouste placed his remarkable stacks (*magasin central*), four stories above ground and one below, designed to hold about 900,000 volumes. The stacks have a glass ceiling, and the daylight falls almost unimpeded from tier to tier through gridiron floorplates (which Panizzi himself had thought of in 1852) down to the basement level. Concerning the Bibliothèque Nationale,

complaint. Books were stolen and mutilated, and Robert Cowtan, an assistant in the library of the Museum, recalled sadly that the long set of *The Pulpit* had to be removed from the reading room because many entire sermons were cut out of it. "Little did the congregations," he says, "to whom these sermons were probably preached, imagine where they had come from" (277). I am afraid that every librarian can easily add such ironies from his own experience. A year or two ago I was informed that, among the mutilations of books recently discovered in the reference room of the University of Pennsylvania Library, the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* had suffered the excision of the long article on "Ethics."

The builders of British libraries in the nineteenth century certainly had their troubles. Panizzi's life was an heroic struggle to convert his vision of a great library into a reality on Great Russell Street, and up the years from Bloomsbury the British Museum grew to a towering height among the world's centers of humanistic research. Inevitably the medievalist contemplates the British Museum with happiness, and Arundell Esdaile, historian of the Museum, very properly emphasizes that of its many services to learning none has been greater than that rendered to the Middle Ages, "nor could any have been more grateful to the shades of Cotton, Arundel, the Harleys and Wanley. . . . The beginnings of the new medieval school, the Gothic revival in its best sense, owed much to [its] foundation" (37). A large debt is owed to the Bodleian also, whose librarian Bandinel found like Panizzi that life was no Italian garden. The trials of Bodley's librarians grew with the century. In February, 1882, the energetic and sometimes misdirected Edward B. Nicholson succeeded the urbane and scholarly H. O. Coxe as Bodley's librarian. Seven years later he made a singularly frank report to the curators of the library, and had he been able in later years to act in the spirit which he enunciated, Old Nick's achievement would have been greater and his life less full of unavailing conflict (Craster, 154):

If this report [he wrote] ever falls into the hands of a successor of mine coming, as I did, into the Bodleian from elsewhere, and full of enthusiasm for "practical" librarianship as well as for librarianship of other kinds, I trust that, before beginning

Sigfried Giedion, *Space, time, and architecture*, 152-163, Cambridge, Mass., 1941, has written: "If there is a Pazzi Chapel to be found anywhere in contemporary architecture, it is here."

stupendous new tasks or any kind of upheaval, he will acquaint himself well with the history of the Library, the stratification (so to speak) of its growth, the conditions attaching to benefactions, the various kinds of current work and the time taken in performing them, and the amount of arrears of work (including cataloguing of old MS collections); will consider what kinds of new work can profitably be undertaken; will give himself plenty of time to acquire sympathy with all that deserves perpetuation in the system and spirit of the library; and, before deciding on anything new, will try to realize and give full weight to all objections to it—the more especially if what he proposes to do is something which cannot be undone or can be undone only with great difficulty. Had I at the outset applied to myself all the advice I offer to him, I should have saved myself from many ill-considered projects, and, although it is something to have abandoned them, it would have been better never to have entertained them. . . .

The trials of the librarians of Bodley and the British Museum, however, were of a different order from those of the American Library of Congress, which was formed by acts of the national legislature passed in April, 1800, and January, 1802. The growth of European libraries during the relative peace of the nineteenth century proceeded at a pace that could hardly be equalled in the United States until well after the Civil War. While Congress met in Philadelphia, its members enjoyed the privilege of using the Library Company, which was moved from the second floor of Carpenters' Hall to its new building on Fifth Street in 1790. It is of course this building, torn down in 1887, which has now been recreated to house the library of the American Philosophical Society. Congress first met in Washington in October, 1800, and made from year to year some provision for its library, which had grown to more than 3,000 volumes by August, 1814, when it was destroyed in the British burning of the Capitol. The library had covered a wide variety of subjects. Its purpose had been to give members of the Senate and House the necessary access to works on law, geography, commerce, diplomatic usage, and the like, as well as on history and literature to prevent their appearing a *parliamentum indoctum* in the eyes of the nation and the world (Mearns, 25). The historian of the Library of Congress informs us that "because there were no other sources of amusement . . . the Library, before 1814 and indeed later, was much resorted to as a place of relaxation" (Johnston, 1: 49).

The Library of Congress was rebuilt after the fire of 1814 by the purchase early in the following year, as is well known, of Thomas Jefferson's library of some 6,500 volumes for \$23,950, and George Watterston became the first true librarian of Congress. In 1824 the library was installed in the west center of the Capitol, in a handsome room heated by two stoves in the form of pillars, with a rug that cost \$1,000. Threatened by another fire in December, 1825, the library lost more than half its books in a third fire in December, 1851, including a large part of the Jefferson collection. For more than twenty years before this disaster, however, the Library of Congress had become a social center for literary and other visitors to Washington, for fashionable ladies, gentlemen, journalists, and loungers, who had much to talk about in 1829 when President Andrew Jackson, three months after his inauguration, removed the Whig librarian Watterston from office and appointed thereto a good Democrat named John Silva Meehan, also a journalist. A battle royal broke out between the *United States Telegraph*, a pro-Jackson paper, and the *National Journal*, whose forces Watterston joined as an editorial writer. The Library of Congress was caught in the middle. Several opportunities were lost to add large private collections to the Library; its administration was criticized, and there seemed small hope of witnessing its expansion into the national library for which American scholarship had such a pathetic need.

There were many who felt this need, and there were those who understood something of the manner in which one should set about building a national library. A noteworthy statement appeared in the columns of the *Union* for 30 December, 1851, just after the destructive fire in the Library of Congress; it is almost a landmark in the history of American librarianship, and was very likely written by Charles C. Jewett, formerly librarian and professor at Brown University, at this time librarian of the Smithsonian Institution:

. . . It should be known that within the last twenty-five years everything relating to the construction of edifices for libraries, their arrangement and conveniences, the means of their preservation from fire, from dampness, from insects, and from depredations and injuries, has been studied most laboriously and thoroughly in England, in France, in Germany, and in Italy. The management of libraries has been reduced to settled principles, and been dignified in Germany by the name of a science. Magazines are

devoted exclusively to the subject, and some of the most organizing and ingenious minds in the world have been working out its problems and arranging its apparently incongruous details. If we wish to be "à la hauteur du siècle," or anywhere near the present age, we can not neglect the lessons of their experience and their labors. Yet who has read, for the benefit of the public archives and the National Library of America, the Reports and minutes of evidence of the Parliamentary commissions upon the British Museum and upon public libraries? They are in six large folio volumes. Who has read the books and pamphlets recently published respecting the national library of Paris? Who has read for this purpose the memoirs of the lamented Dellessert or the works of Laborde, Della Santa, Molbech, Schrettinger, Namur, Hesse, Reiffenberg, Peignot, and many others, and the journals conducted by Dr. Naumann and Dr. Petzholdt? Without studying these one can not feel confident that he is moving in the light of modern knowledge about such matters. . . . (cited by Johnston, 1: 282-283).

There were, however, those who did not care whether they were moving in the light of modern knowledge upon such matters.

When in 1846 plans were being discussed for building a national library under the newly organized Smithsonian Institution, Robert Dale Owen of Indiana said in the House of Representatives (on 22 April), in a speech ostensibly in support of a library grant of \$10,000 from the Smithsonian bequest:

It grieves me not that the fantastic taste of some epicure in learning may chance to find, on the bookshelves of Paris, some literary morsel of choice and ancient flavor, such as our own metropolis supplies not. I feel no envy if we republicans are outdone by luxurious Europe in some high-seasoned delicacy of the pampered soul. Enough have we to console ourselves—objects of national ambition, how much higher, how infinitely nobler than these; objects of national pride, before which these petty antiquarian triumphs dwarf down into utter insignificance! . . . And shall we grudge to Europe her antiquarian lore, her cumbrous folios, her illuminated manuscripts, the chaff of learned dullness that encumbers her old library shelves? . . . Let them feel [envy] who behold, from afar, our people bravely battling their onward way; treading, with liberty at their side, the path of progressive improvement; each step upward and onward—onward to the great goal of public virtue and social equality (*Congressional Globe* 16: 469-470, cited by Johnston, 1: 421).

While Mr. Owen trod upward and onward to the great goal, the Library of Congress lumbered along in a halting gait, confused as to whether it had any goal at all. While congressional orators were rifling the anthologies in the Library for bright flowers to adorn their speeches and

culling from the encyclopedias erroneous statistics concerning, among other things, the sizes of European book collections, Panizzi was building the library of the British Museum. Washington was of course merely the capital of the nation, and not an economic, social, and cultural center as were London, Paris, Rome, Vienna, and Munich. Efforts to form a national Smithsonian library were also destined to frustration although the idea had the energetic support of Senator Rufus Choate of Massachusetts and Representative George Perkins Marsh of Vermont.

In December, 1848, C. C. Jewett emphasized in his first report on the library of the Smithsonian:

. . . The importance of bibliographical studies is in this country but too little appreciated. In truth, the neglect of them is the most fruitful source of superficial, conceited and rash authorship. On the continent of Europe, however, they are held in the highest esteem. This is doubtless one principal cause of the acknowledged superiority of the Germans in all matters requiring wide research. Every student worthy of the name when about to investigate a subject wishes to know first what has been done by others in the same field.

Jewett planned a union catalogue of American libraries to be based initially upon the holdings of Harvard University and the Library Company of Philadelphia. In his second report (of July, 1850), Jewett entertained for the United States the ambition to which Panizzi had given expression for British scholarship in 1836. Alluding to the appearance of George Ticknor's *History of Spanish Literature*, Jewett says,

There has recently appeared from the American press, written by an American scholar, one of the most comprehensive, profound, and elegant works which has ever been published in the department of literary history. We receive it with patriotic pride. But this work could be written in this country only by one who was able to procure for himself the necessary literary apparatus. The library of the author contains some 13,000 volumes, and in the department of Spanish literature is one of the richest in the world. Our object is to provide that *every man* in America, though he be poor, whose mind kindles with a great theme, may be able to pursue it and enrich our national literature with the results of original investigations (Johnston, 1: 437, 481).

Jewett's vision of the future did not accord, however, with that of the Regents of the Smithsonian. The plan for a national library was abandoned, Jewett dismissed from his position in July, 1854, and Rufus Choate resigned from the Board of Regents the following January. American scholarship had been dealt a consider-

able blow. A dozen years later, however, in 1866, the Smithsonian library was turned over to the Library of Congress, which in the following year acquired Peter Force's large collection of Americana (Mearns, 118-120), and shortage of space soon became the library's major problem. Year after year this need was pointed up in the reports of A. R. Spofford as librarian of Congress (1864-1897). Finally, after various changes of plan and long delays, Spofford's persistent efforts were rewarded by the construction of the present (main) library building, to which between April and November, 1897, the bulk of the book stock, now weighing some 800 tons, was transferred in two or three one-horse wagons (each rented at \$2.50 a day, driver included) from many scattered locations in the Capitol (*ibid.*, 150-152). During the critical period of the move, as hopes rose throughout the country for a true national library, the able J. R. Young presided for about eighteen months over the Library of Congress (1897-1899), being succeeded after the customary political indecision and bickering by Herbert Putnam, then librarian of the Boston Public Library. Its sluggish past behind it, the Library of Congress now moved forward with seven-leagued boots. Important acquisitions were made in the G. V. Yudin library of Russica and general Slavica (in 1907), great accessions of Hispanica, Japanese and Chinese materials, in music and other areas, most notably in rare books with the purchase of the Otto H. F. Vollbehr Collection (1930) and the gift of the Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection (from 1943). Herbert Putnam was librarian of Congress for four decades (1899-1939), the Annex to the library being opened in his last year of office, which brings us to the Second World War and to our own generation.

When the first centenary of the American republic was being celebrated in 1876, John Eaton, Commissioner of Education, presented to the Hon. Zachariah Chandler, then Secretary of the Interior, a special report on *Public Libraries in the United States of America: Their History, Condition, and Management*. Part I of this survey is a fat volume which required two years to compile. It includes much material on American college and university libraries, and while these had obviously been built up by the hard work and sacrifices of many enlightened individuals, the achievement of the first century could give little indication of the phenomenal

growth which certain American university libraries were to attain in the next eight decades. Of more immediate interest to us here, however, are the two sections of this report devoted to the library of the American Philosophical Society, which is described as "the mother society in America, and once the center of science of the United States." The Society, like most research libraries both in this country and abroad, has lived to no small extent on the legacies of enlightened patrons of learning.

It is my understanding that very few large bequests to libraries, universities, and the like go uncontested today, and the abodes of learning are frequently engaged in litigation with the heirs of their benefactors. But in the long history of libraries this is not a new phenomenon, as a Latin entry in the seventeenth-century Donors' Book of the Queen's College, Oxford, makes quite clear (Streeter, 256):

Henry Wheeler, gentleman-commoner of this College, when on the point of setting out for Spain, about

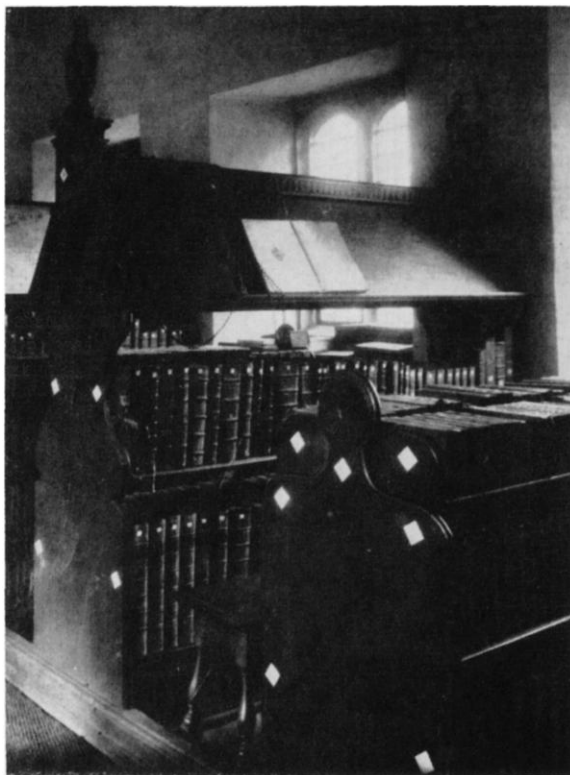


FIG. 7. Lectern in the old library of Trinity Hall, Cambridge (about 1600), the original back-to-back bench, on the right, now being fitted out as a book case.

the year 1635, made a will in which he left to this Queen's College, Oxford, 100 pounds for enlarging the library furniture. Shortly afterwards he died, stabbed by ruffians set on him by some Scotchman or other at Madrid or Valladolid. He had made heir to his property a relative and namesake,—Wheeler, a citizen of Westminster, living in the street, Channel Row. Being approached by us more than once about paying the legacy, he proceeded first to make friendly promises, then to spin delays, lastly with increasing violence explicitly to refuse. The time will come when, with the favour of Heaven if not to us, at any rate to our successors, there will be granted what it is lawful and right to demand.

For the American Philosophical Society this time came a generation ago, with the establishment in the 'thirties of the Penrose, Johnson, and Daland Funds, from which the Society now supports a wide range of research projects.

Before this time, of course, the activities of the Society were much more restricted and the support of the library itself much less strong than today. The report of the commissioner of education in 1876 contains some interesting notices of the Society's library, which then contained, according to information furnished by the librarian, Mr. J. P. Lesley, "20,000 volumes, 15,000 pamphlets, and over 100 volumes of manuscripts, most of them dating from the last century [i.e. the eighteenth century]. . . . All departments of knowledge are represented," it is said,

but there is a lack of modern books. . . . The accessions to the library average 400 volumes a year. . . . The library is free for reference to persons introduced by members [there were then 482 members] or otherwise suitably recommended. Members can borrow books, giving bond for their safe return.

The society owns a building the value of which is variously estimated at from \$80,000 to \$120,000. Its yearly income, amount not stated, is derived from rents, interest on investments, and members' dues [those living within ten miles of Philosophical Hall then paid an annual fee of \$5.00]. The only salaried officer is the librarian, who receives \$700 a year. The treasurer receives a commission on the funds in his hands (363–364 and *cf.* 962–963).

The commissioner's report notes elsewhere, in its description of the Library Company of Philadelphia, which then occupied the building that has been recreated for the library of the Society, that "by the lapse of time the present building has become somewhat venerable, and its interior, though plain, is impressive" (954).

Among the witnesses to the impressiveness of this building was the Rev. Dr. James W. Alexander, a prominent Presbyterian, twice a professor in Princeton, New Jersey. His two volumes of correspondence are filled with references to the books he was reading and had read. A man of sound judgment, Alexander wrote his friend John Hall from London in August, 1851: "I think the British Museum worth my whole voyage and journey and expense . . ." (*Correspondence* 2: 154), but a few years later he wrote Hall that "no library I have ever seen, not even the Bodleian, has left such traces on my imagination as the Old Philadelphia, which I want to see again" (*ibid.* 2: 195). Now all the world may see it again, and it would be Dr. Alexander's wish, I take it, if after the fashion of James I he had to be a prisoner, that he might pass his sentence in the building which the American Philosophical Society will henceforth be maintaining for the promotion of useful knowledge.